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QUESTION OF THE VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE OCCUPIED ARAB TERRITORIES, INCLUDING PALESTINE

QUESTION OF THE VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS, INCLUDING POLICIES OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION AND SEGREGATION AND OF APARTHEID, IN ALL COUNTRIES, WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO COLONIAL AND OTHER DEPENDENT COUNTRIES AND TERRITORIES: REPORT OF THE SUB-COMMISSION UNDER COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS RESOLUTION 8 (XXIII)

Letter dated 16 July 1992 from the Permanent Observer for Palestine to the United Nations Office at Geneva addressed to the Under-Secretary-General for Human Rights

For the third successive day, Israeli occupation forces are maintaining their military blockade of Al-Najah National University at Nablus, in which 4,000 students, professors, administrative staff and other university employees are under siege. For the second successive day, Israeli occupation forces are also maintaining their military blockade of the town of Nablus and neighbouring villages, in which more than 200,000 persons are living. This blockade means that food and medical requisites cannot be brought into the besieged areas and residents suffering from the effects of the blockade cannot be taken to hospital for treatment. This operation, which the Israeli

occupation authorities launched three days ago against the students of the besieged Al-Najah National University and the town of Nablus, provides further proof of the policy of subjecting the Palestinian people to collective punishments, which are prohibited by the principles of human rights, through acts designed to destroy and annihilate this people in violation of the provisions of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. Moreover, this blockade of Al-Najah National University and the town of Nablus was ordered by Yitzhak Rabin, the new Prime Minister of Israel, only 20 days after Yitzhak Shamir, the former Prime Minister, had imposed a similar military blockade on the Gaza Strip, as result of which scores of Palestinians were killed, thousands were starved and thousands more were exposed to various types of diseases caused by the blockade. The present leader of the Labour Party, who came to power in Israel only four days ago in a deceptively promising guise, soon demonstrated his true and unchanged intentions to the whole world through this grave criminal act against Al-Najah National University and the town of Nablus in our occupied Palestinian territory in volation of the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War even though, for the last 25 years, the Security Council, the General Assembly, the Commission on Human Rights and the International Committee of the Red Cross have emphasized that they apply to the occupied Palestinian territories notwithstanding the persistent manner in which the Government of Israel and the military occupation authorities have rejected the international community's will by refusing to apply the provisions of the Convention to the occupied Palestinian territories. The blockade of Al-Najah National University and the town of Nablus came in the wake of the failure of the international community, represented by the Security Council and the Commission on Human Rights, to condemn the crime of the blockade of the Gaza Strip on 25 May 1992 which led to the loss of innocent lives and the infliction of cruel suffering on the whole population of the Strip. In particular, the present blockade came after the Commission on Human Rights had been prevented from holding an emergency session to consider the deteriorating human rights situation in the occupied Palestinian territories after the above-mentioned blockade of the Gaza Strip. This means that the holding of an emergency session of the Commission on Human Rights is not only still justified but has become even more necessary following the assumption of power by Rabin, the originator of the "iron fist" policy against the Palestinian people.

The current events in and around Al-Najah National University, the town of Nablus and its villages denote a serious escalation in Israeli practices against civilians and their educational institutions, since the occupation forces that are besieging the University are firing shots at its walls from time to time. Moreover, representatives of the international press are being prevented from entering the town and supplies of food and medical requisites sent to the town and the University are being turned back. On 16 July 1992, the occupation authorities also cut off all telephone communications with the University in order to further isolate it and its occupants from the outside world.

We are submitting this note to you in the hope that you will make urgent representations to the Government of Israel to lift the blockade that has been imposed on Al-Najah National University at Nablus, to permit the besieged students to return safely to their homes, and to lift the blockade on the town of Nalbus and its population. At the same time, we would be grateful if you would kindly have this note circulated as an official document at the sessions of the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities and the Commission on Human Rights

(Signed): Nabil RAMLAWI
Ambassador
Permanent Observer for Palestine
at the United Nations, Geneva